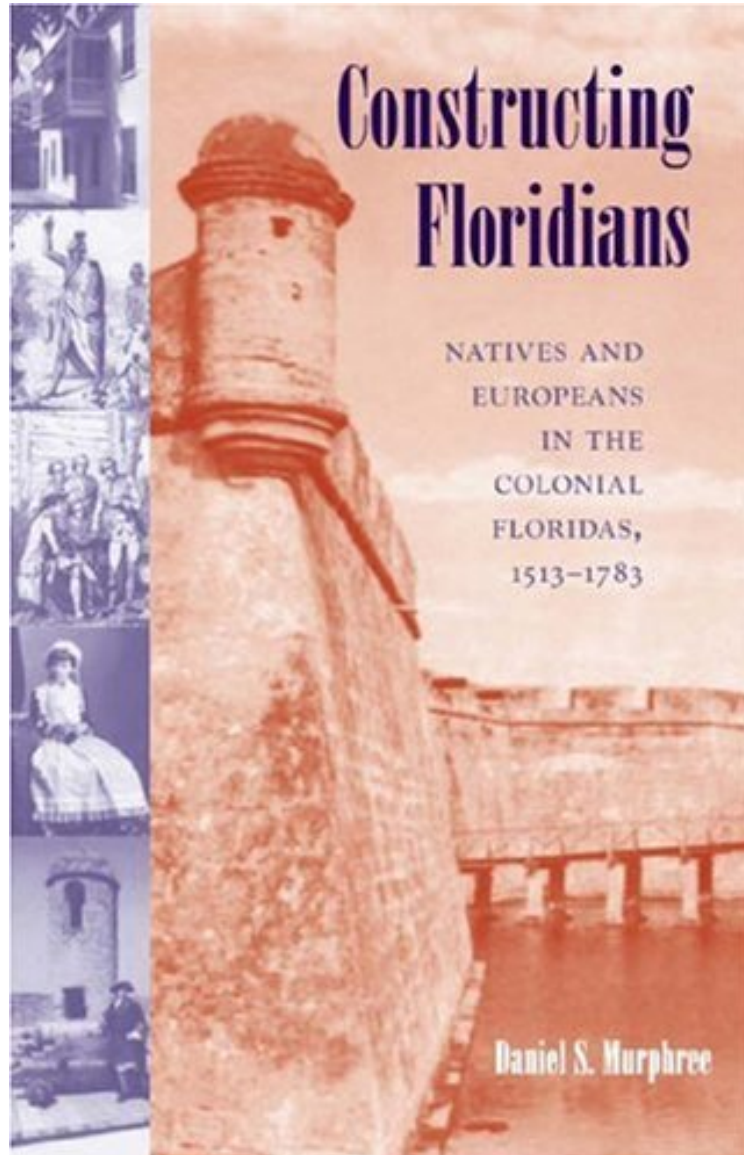


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# Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783

*Daniel S. Murphree*

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**Daniel S. Murphree : Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Self-defense and tactical nonviolenceBy James MarshallThis study

reviews in depth the introduction of armed self-defense in the rural areas of Louisiana and the Black Belt South and the motivations of local blacks to defend themselves against white Southern violence against the black community. It concentrates mainly on the Louisiana communities and pays little attention to other areas in the Deep South, especially Mississippi, which Lance Hill's Deacons for Defense does. The study pays particular attention to black manhood and the interaction between nonviolence in the civil rights movement and armed self-defense efforts of members of the black communities. It further examines the Black Power movement. More importantly it examines black self-defense efforts in locations such as those in Jonesboro and Bogalusa, Louisiana, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and St. Augustine, Florida, which were successful in protecting local black efforts at integration. However, these were mainly nighttime efforts to protect the communities rather than daylight confrontations with the Ku Klux Klan. The historical importance of this study is in its examining the interaction of black organizations of armed self-defense groups and their relationship to the nonviolent local civil rights efforts.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. best account of armed defense

By History-prof-11 picked up this book on a whim at a history conference. Having read some of the other books on armed self-defense and civil rights - Tyson's *Radio Free Dixie*, Strain's *Pure Fire*, Hill's *Deacons for Defense* - I was somewhat surprised to find another new book on this subject. My suspicions that this study might simply repeat what others have said quickly gave way to shock that there was so much about self-defense that we still don't know. Wendt shows how armed resistance went hand in hand with nonviolence throughout much of the movement. His account is nicely balanced. Tyson, while he's written a great book, gives far too much importance to Robert Williams, setting him up as the typical model of a black self-defense activist in the 1950s and 1960s when he is atypical. Strain almost entirely dismisses nonviolence as a fiction, something that most scholars and laypeople would disagree with. Wendt doesn't make these mistakes. He shows the long history of self-defense. He also demonstrates the myriad ways in which armed defense worked in tandem with nonviolent protests. In numerous instances across the South, black defenders not only protected young protestors, they permitted those protests to take place. Additionally, the fear that protests and armed black men generated among numerous local whites actually motivated local businesses and city governments to integrate. These are fascinating stories that show the multifaceted nature of the black freedom struggle. Wendt also explores the Black Power era, focusing on how armed defense and black masculinity worked together. This is an important line of gender analysis that only a few scholars have tackled (focusing on men is also interesting given that often "gender history" is a standin for "women's history"). Wendt ultimately concludes, rightly I would argue, that guns in the Black Power movement worked against the struggle because the tandem element of nonviolence was missing. While Black Power activists certainly did not encourage violence...they encouraged self-defense...they distanced themselves from nonviolence. The focus on solely "the shotgun" minus "the spirit" worked to hurt the Black Power movement and hindered its success. This is a very good book, one I found after buying it that has been positively evaluated in almost every major history journal. Contrary to what the other reviewer has stated (and he's written a fine review), Wendt focuses on almost every southern state in the Deep South, including a full chapter on Mississippi. Perhaps Mississippi differs from other states in that the armed confrontations between blacks and whites took place at night and have received less attention than Louisiana and the Deacons. This book shows how exhaustive research, great stories, and a good thesis can produce a fantastic piece of scholarship.

Florida Historical Society Harry T. Harriette V. Moore Award. Florida Book Award for Florida Nonfiction, Silver

Constructing Floridians explores the origins of racialization in peninsular Florida and its hinterlands during the 300 years prior to the founding of the United States. Focusing not on a single ethnic or cultural community but on all the major groups in the region during the colonial period, this sociocultural study of Europeans and native tribes examines the processes by which the peoples of Spain, France, and Great Britain and half a dozen Florida tribes the Gulaes, Calusas, Timucuan, Apalachees, Creeks, and Seminoles forged understandings of one another and themselves through their individual and collective ideas and activities. Murphree argues that the Europeans, frustrated by their inability to tame the peninsula, blamed the natives for their problems. Emphasizing how environmental limitations and repeated colonial failures contributed to increasingly negative perceptions and characterizations of American Indians which the Europeans attributed to perceived racial differences she contends that barriers between the Europeans and the Indians hardened over time.

"Marks an important shift in the historiography of colonial Florida."--Florida Historical Quarterly

"Murphree has uncovered a rich tale of cross-cultural divisions and mutual disappointments."--Journal of Southern History

"A fresh and interesting approach."--Tampa Bay History

"This compendium of quotations with its ample supporting bibliography is a gift to the field of Gulf South studies, in which the later colonies come into their own."--American Historical

"Race and racism simply did not arrive to the shores of Florida. Instead, this volume demonstrates how racism emerged out of the frustrations and failures of the Spaniards, Frenchmen, and Britons to control the land and people of Florida . . . an important addition to the growing literature of race in early America."--Andrew K. Frank, author of *Before the Pioneers: Indians, Settlers, Slaves, and the Founding of Miami*

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